



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

175 W. Jackson Blvd,
Suite 1650
Chicago, IL 60604
312-913-3200
rtachicago.org

June 13, 2016

Subject: Request For Information No.3752: Proposed Development of Chicagoland Innovative Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities Pilot Program

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is seeking responses for the subject procurement. All documents required to submit a response are attached. Responses should be delivered to:

Regional Transportation Authority
Bid Reception- 16th Floor
175 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

A pre-proposal conference will not be held. However, the RTA may request meetings with respondents. The meetings will be scheduled on a rolling basis and may begin during the open RFI period while responses are being received, or after the response due date. None of the information provided in the written submittal or in a presentation will be held confidential.

Additional questions may be submitted through June 20, 2016. Please direct all questions James Kozicki at kozickij@rtachicago.org

One original copy and one electronic copy on a USB drive containing your complete response should be submitted to the RTA no later than **3:30 p.m., local time, on June 28, 2016.**

Where responses are sent by mail, delivery service, or are delivered in-person to the RTA Bid Office, the respondents shall be responsible for their delivery before the due date and time. The Bid Office hours are Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Chicago time, except holidays.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James Kozicki'.

James Kozicki
Manager, Procurement and Contracting

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

REQUISITION NO. 3752

**FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF
CHICAGOLAND INNOVATIVE MOBILITY
FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
PILOT PROGRAM**

Any questions or requests for additional information should be submitted to James Kozicki, Manager, Procurement & Contracting at (312) 913-3228, or kozickij@rtachicago.org.

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I. RFI PROCESS

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) of northeastern Illinois, in partnership with McHenry County and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), is exploring a pilot public-private partnership with shared-use mobility companies to enhance transportation services for older adults and persons with disabilities in suburban areas of the RTA region. The intent of the pilot is twofold: (1) To supplement the MCRide dial-a-ride program with additional transportation options that allow residents to make spontaneous trips throughout the McRide Service Area on subsidized shared-ride services, and (2) To increase the fleet of accessible vehicles available for transportation providers and members of the public in McHenry County and other suburban population centers. We invite you to share your insight and expertise on this potential pilot program through this Request for Information (RFI) process.

This RFI is a mechanism for the RTA to gather input from the market regarding the reasonableness and appeal to potential private partners of the proposed “Chicagoland Innovative Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities Pilot” structure and operation. No contract will be awarded from this RFI. Information received will not be held confidential and may be shared with other government agencies and interested parties. The RTA may adapt information received to further its grant funding proposals or in the development of later procurement actions.

The RTA shall bear no risks, obligations, or costs related to the preparation of responses to this RFI.

II. RTA BACKGROUND

The Illinois State Legislature created the RTA in 1974 to provide public transportation in the six-county area surrounding Chicago in northeastern Illinois. These counties are Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will, covering approximately 3,700 square miles and serving approximately eight million residents.

In 1983, the RTA Act was amended with substantial changes made to the RTA's organization, funding and operations. The amended Act created three "service boards" known as the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra commuter rail, and Pace suburban bus, including paratransit. The RTA's primary responsibilities are now financial and budget oversight of CTA, Metra, and Pace, and regional transit planning issues.

The RTA's mission is to ensure a fiscally sound, comprehensive and coordinated transit system in northeastern Illinois. It is governed by a sixteen-member Board of Directors which employs an Executive Director to administer and manage the organization.

Additional information can be obtained at www.rtachicago.com.

III. INTRODUCTION

RTA, IDOT, and McHenry County each have a role in providing paratransit services to older adults and people with disabilities in suburban portions of the RTA region.

RTA Section 5310 Funding Program

The RTA is the region's Designated Recipient for Federal [Section 5310](#) Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities funding. (See <http://rtachicago.org/plans-programs/grants-projects/section-5310>). Section 5310 provides funds to counties, non-profits, and public agencies to serve the transportation needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The RTA receives the local apportionments, develops a program of projects for funding through the program, and ensures that the projects that receive funding meet local needs and comply with Federal requirements. IDOT receives a portion of these funds, which it uses to support the Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (described in following section). The RTA and IDOT, through these roles, help to fund and enable paratransit services that provide mobility in areas of the region not covered by fixed route transit or ADA complementary service. Over ten other grantees currently receive funding through the 5310 program and its predecessors, including suburban McHenry County for some trips provided through its MCRide program (also covered in the following section).

IDOT Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) Program

The CVP program functions within IDOT's Division of Intermodal Project Implementation. As its central asset, the CVP program holds ongoing term-contracts with vendors for the purchase of ADA-complaint, FTA-approved, fully accessible paratransit vehicles. Vehicles are provided to paratransit and/or public transportation providers via these term contracts, and paid for with a combination of local, State and Federal (5310, 5311, 5339, etc.) funds as specific project models dictate.

MCRide

MCRide is a coordinated dial-a-ride program organized amongst multiple municipalities in McHenry County dedicated to meeting the needs of county residents, including seniors and individuals with disabilities. The service requires an advanced reservation, and operates six days a week from morning to early evening. McHenry County is located in the Northwest portion of the RTA's service area. It is a rural county with a dispersed and relatively low density population of 307,343 in 611 sq. miles. It is served by Metra's Union Pacific/Northwest Line and four Pace Suburban fixed route buses, as well as complementary ADA Paratransit service in portions of McHenry with fixed route service. Most of McHenry's geographic area is outside of the fixed route transit service area, which had led to the need for paratransit service across population centers in the county and the development of MCRide. McHenry County Division of Transportation developed and administers the MCRide service, using vehicles provided through the IDOT Consolidated Vehicle Program and an operating arrangement with Pace. MCRide is providing approximately 8,500 trips monthly to older adults, persons with disabilities and the general public in McHenry County. This project is funded through a combination of local funding and the Section 5310 Program assistance.

IV. PILOT PROPOSAL, GOALS AND REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The overall goal of this pilot project is to explore whether public transportation agency partnerships with transportation network companies (TNCs) and carsharing companies could enhance mobility for older adults and persons with disabilities in suburban areas at a lower cost than traditional paratransit could do. Of particular interest is the ability to take more spontaneous, wheelchair-accessible trips than are typically possible with the current reservation-based, dial-a-ride services. The pilot would have two components:

1. Supplementary Shared-Use Mobility in McHenry County, partnering with TNCs or other operators and technology companies to provide on-demand trips supplementing the advanced reservation-based MCRide service currently provided by the County.
2. Accessible Vehicle-Share, partnering with vehicle sharing companies to create a small fleet of accessible vehicles available to the public and to TNC operators in McHenry County. This fleet of vehicles may also span other suburban population centers across RTA's six-county region.

Both of these components are described in the sections that follow.

Supplementary Shared-Use Mobility Pilot: How it would work

The primary private sector partner in this portion of the pilot would be a Transportation Provider, defined in this context as a professional, insured entity that can accept trip requests from riders; calculate the trip route and fares; provide a platform for operators to accept trips and communicate with customers when necessary; and provide the transportation for the rider. A Transportation Provider could be a professional transportation company with a ride-matching technology platform or a TNC utilizing independent drivers.

Residents of McHenry who currently hold an RTA reduced fare card or are eligible for one (based on disability or age), or those who hold an RTA ride free permit or are eligible for one (based on income), would apply for and receive an account and/or special code to be used to access transportation service through a TNC or TNC-like technology platform. The technology platform would be used to book curb-to-curb rides within existing MCRide boundaries, either on-demand or as a future reservation via phone, online, or mobile device. If needed, the rider would be able to request an accessible or lift-equipped vehicle and the appropriate level of driver assistance required. The riders would pay a pre-determined flat fare and an additional distance-based fare. A fixed portion of the trip cost will be paid for by public subsidy and anything beyond that will be paid for by the riders using their own personal form of payment. The public subsidy owed to the Transportation Provider would be billed to McHenry County and paid for through local and federal 5310 funds managed by the RTA based on reimbursement eligibility. This service would provide an estimated 35 trips per day, or 10% of what MCRide currently provides, in the service area.

The Transportation Provider would be responsible for fulfilling trip requests, as well as assigning the appropriate driver and obtaining vehicles to provide an accessible trip within a reasonable timeframe when

such is requested. This would likely be made possible by registering the Transportation Provider and its drivers with a Vehicle Share Company through the Accessible Vehicle Vehicle Share Pilot (described in the next section).

Driver training and testing for serving eligible riders would be highly valued and possibly required in this model. Training could be provided either directly by the Transportation Provider to its drivers, or indirectly to independent TNC drivers on a volunteer basis to gain access to the accessible vehicle pool. This training could be provided through Pace or one of many other paratransit training providers. Voluntary training for independent TNC drivers could be incentivized, possibly by allowing reduced or free short-term access to the accessible vehicle pool for the provision of eligible service, or possibly through a higher driver compensation ratio for eligible trips.

Accessible Vehicle-Share Pilot: How it would work

The primary private sector partner in this portion of the pilot would be a Vehicle Share Company. The Vehicle Share Company would be capable of qualifying users and then allowing pre-qualified users to rent insured vehicles on an hourly basis for the private or for-hire use.

In this model, a fixed number of vehicles that can accommodate all passengers, including wheelchair accessibility, may be purchased by IDOT, titled to RTA, and leased to a Vehicle Share Company. The Vehicle Share Company would list these vehicles in its reservation system, advertise them to one or more TNC's, and deploy them at key suburban locations for short term (i.e. hourly) rentals under their operating model. Pre-qualified drivers operating for a TNC may book the accessible vehicles for use and operate them for the TNC, particularly those trips requested through the McHenry Supplemental Shared-Use Mobility pilot described above. Any member of the public with a membership with the Vehicle Share Company wishing to book an accessible vehicle for personal use would be able to do so as well. To encourage TNC drivers to provide accessible trips, these vehicles would be made available through a reduced or free Vehicle Share rate and drivers would receive sensitivity training as described in the Supplementary Shared-Use Mobility Pilot section. Such an arrangement would require technology that allows only authorized drivers to reserve and use vehicles at reduced rates and only while operating as an accessible vehicle for a TNC. All other public reservations of the vehicle would be made at rates set by the Vehicle Share Company. Some level of subsidy by the public partners is expected to be provided to lower costs of accessible trips. Note that some vehicles under the Accessible Vehicle-Share Pilot would have to be located within McHenry County in order to be utilized for the Supplementary Shared-Use Mobility Pilot.

Request for Information

The RTA is requesting information on the following topics. Please respond to any or all of the questions, using the numbering system for the topics and sub-topics listed below

1. Please comment on general structure of proposed pilot.
 - A. Are there aspects which make it undesirable for your firm's participation?

- B. What are the strong/attractive aspects of the proposal?
 - C. Are there ways in which you would reformat the partnership concept?
 - D. Are there regulatory hurdles that would hinder your desire to participate?
 - E. Would you anticipate technology development costs beyond your current resources? If so, do you have a sense of the typical range for such technology costs?
2. Please comment on the technical challenges related to:
- A. Platform for booking (including by phone) and dispatching trips by Transportation Provider drivers in the Supplementary Shared Use Mobility pilot.
 - B. Incorporating special vehicle types into a ride requesting application, including the ability to confine those requests to specific geographic locations.
 - C. Billing and payment structure for shared costs between users and RTA/public agency.
 - D. Integration of the TNC model with Vehicle Share vehicles.
3. Please comment on operational aspects of the proposed pilot:
- A. What would be an appropriate expectation for TNC response time from trip request to passenger pick-up for an accessible service in McHenry County?
 - B. What would be the order-of-magnitude for minimum number of vehicles and locations needed for the Accessible Vehicle-Share Pilot?
 - i. Should these be focused at a few suburban locations or more widely dispersed across region?
 - ii. Are there logistical challenges incorporating and maintaining a small number of a new vehicle type within a Vehicle Share fleet?
 - C. For the purposes of learning from the pilot, do you foresee any issues providing data as it pertains to operations:
 - i. Trip data;
 - ii. Cost data;
 - iii. User demographic data; or
 - iv. Are there other possible data you may offer as a way to measure pilot performance?
4. Have you participated in any similar types of partnerships or partnership discussions and what are the lessons learned?
5. Do you have any other insights to offer that could be taken into consideration?

V. RFI RESPONSES

Please address the preceding questions in light of the RTA's goals for this project, and include any relevant technical and experiential feedback that the RTA should consider if the RTA were to develop an RFP for this approach in the future. Responses should be categorized into the categories outlined in the previous section.

A pre-proposal conference will not be held. However, the RTA may request meetings with respondents. The meetings will be scheduled on a rolling basis and may begin during the open RFI period while responses are being received, or after the response due date. None of the information provided in the written submittal or in a presentation will be held confidential.